United Nations S/PV.5172

Security Council

Sixtieth year

Provisional

5172nd meeting

Friday, 29 April 2005, 10.30 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Wang Guangya	(China)
Members:	Algeria	Mr. Baali
	Argentina	Mr. Mayoral
	Benin	Mr. Adechi
	Brazil	Mr. Valle
	Denmark	Mr. Faaborg-Andersen
	France	Mr. De La Sabliere
	Greece	Mr. Vassilakis
	Japan	Mr. Kitaoka
	Philippines	Mr. Baja
	Romania	Mr. Dumitru
	Russian Federation	Mr. Denisov
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Thomson
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Manongi
	United States of America	Mr. Holliday

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

First semi-annual report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004) (S/2005/272)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records*

[illegible] delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

05-32721 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

First semi-annual report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004) (S/2005/272)

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Terje Roed-Larsen, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004).

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Roed-Larsen to take a seat at the Council table.

I welcome the presence of the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, at this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2005/272, which contains the first semi-annual report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on the implementation of resolution 1559 (2004).

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Terje Roed-Larsen, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004). I now give him the floor.

Mr. Roed-Larsen: The twenty-sixth of April 2005 was undoubtedly a historic day for the Lebanese and the Syrian people and for the Middle East. The visible withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanon; Syria's formal notification of the United Nations, through a letter from Foreign Minister Al-Shara' to the Secretary-General, that Syria has withdrawn its military assets and the intelligence apparatus from Lebanon: these are unquestionably momentous events.

It was the Lebanese civil war that led to the deployment of foreign forces on Lebanese territory. Now, 30 years after the eruption of the civil war, a full and complete Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon would represent a significant and important step towards drawing a final line under the saddest chapter of Lebanese history. A full Syrian withdrawal would also represent significant and important action towards ending, with finality, the foreign interference that has characterized Lebanese politics for decades.

We therefore welcome the letter from the Government of Syria to the Secretary-General formally notifying him that Syria has completed its withdrawal of all its troops, military assets and the intelligence apparatus from Lebanon. We also welcome once again Syria's commitment to the full implementation of resolution 1559 (2004) and to the fulfilment of its obligations under that resolution.

In order to verify the full and complete withdrawal of Syrian forces, the Secretary-General has dispatched a United Nations verification mission. That mission, which was established in full agreement with the Governments of Syria and Lebanon, arrived in Damascus on 26 April. The Secretary-General has requested the Governments of Syria and Lebanon to cooperate fully with the mission and to provide all relevant information and documentation concerning the former deployment of Syrian troops, military assets and the intelligence apparatus in Lebanon. Both Governments assured the United Nations that they would assist the mission in its important task. The Secretary-General will forward his conclusions related to the Syrian withdrawal as a supplement to his present report to the Council in the near future.

A full and complete withdrawal of Syrian troops, military assets and the intelligence apparatus from Lebanon will require a wider-ranging redefinition of the long-standing close ties between Syria and Lebanon. In that regard, it is to be expected that the two countries will make significant progress towards the establishment of diplomatic representations in their respective capitals and towards an appropriate formalization of their special relationship. That, of course, is a bilateral matter.

In his efforts on the part of the United Nations

high priority to the provision of resolution 1559 (2004) that calls for the withdrawal of all remaining foreign forces from Lebanon; he has, overall, placed an especially strong emphasis on respect for — and the full restoration of — the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and political independence of Lebanon. The withdrawal of foreign forces is a precondition for the restoration of the full sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of Lebanon.

Another such precondition, and a most visible indication of the sovereignty and political independence of any democracy, is the holding of free and credible parliamentary elections. The Secretary-General has therefore also assigned a very high priority to the matter of Lebanese parliamentary elections.

We commend the decision by Prime Minister Mikati's Government to hold the elections on time and as scheduled, beginning on 29 May 2005. We also welcome the unequivocal confirmation Mr. Mikati's new government has received in the Lebanese parliament, where it passed a vote of confidence with 109 to one votes, with three abstentions, on 27 April. We see the vote as a strong manifestation of the will of the Lebanese people and as an endorsement of Mr. Mikati's pledge to hold the elections on time.

We have been very concerned over a possible delay of the elections. Such a delay could have contributed to exacerbating the political divisions in Lebanon and have threatened the security, stability and prosperity of the country. It has therefore been the Secretary-General's strong conviction that the elections should be held on time and without delay.

The elections should also be held in accordance with an electoral law that is broadly accepted by the Lebanese people. Further, in order to ensure that the parliamentary elections can be conducted in a free and credible manner, we have been discussing with the Government of Lebanon the possibility of extending United Nations technical assistance. United Nations electoral experts will arrive in Beirut early next week, with the full understanding of the Government of Lebanon. Those advisors will seek to assist the Government in its preparations for such free and credible elections.

The Secretary-General has also encouraged the idea that international electoral observers be invited to monitor the elections. In close cooperation with constructive dialogue with the Government of Lebanon on that matter.

The parties have made significant and noticeable progress towards implementing some of the provisions contained in resolution 1559 (2004). However, we cannot yet certify that the requirements of resolution 1559 (2004) have been met. There has been a lack of progress on the implementation of other provisions of the resolution. We are also awaiting the report of our verification mission.

Regarding the Council's call in resolution 1559 (2004) for all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias to be disbanded and disarmed, the United Nations has conducted a dialogue with some relevant parties on that matter. We have not yet reached operational conclusions on the matter, but expect that our dialogue on the issue will intensify in the coming months.

With respect to the Council's support of the extension of the control of the Government of Lebanon over all Lebanese territory, the Government of Lebanon does not yet fully exert control over all its territory. It is the Secretary-General's strong belief that more needs to be done to meet the Council's call for extended measures to ensure the return of effective governmental authority throughout the south of Lebanon. That would include the deployment of additional Lebanese armed forces, including along the Blue Line. We also expect the Government of Lebanon to extend its control over Lebanese territory vacated by Syrian forces.

In conclusion, allow me to reiterate the Secretary-General's call urging all parties concerned to comply with all requirements of resolution 1559 (2004) without delay. We also urge all parties, in keeping with the resolution, to fully implement it and all other resolutions related to the restoration of the territorial integrity, full sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon. It is our strong belief that the full implementation of all requirements of the resolution would help enable the people of Lebanon and of the entire region to begin setting aside the enchaining and constraining vestiges of a captive past.

It is also our belief that the full implementation of resolution 1559 (2004), with the backing and active engagement of the Secretary-General, would set an important precedent, illustrating the commitment of the international community to the full implementation of

me to reiterate the Secretary-General's belief that the implementation of resolution 1559 (2004) should continue to proceed in a way that would best ensure the stability and unity of Lebanon, of Syria and of the wider region.

The Secretary-General remains at the disposal of the Council and stands ready to continue to assist the parties in the full implementation of resolution 1559 (2004).

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Roed-Larsen for his briefing.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I should now like to invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.